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this revision of judgment will have been greatly aided by this essay.

It would require almost a volume to notice the points worthy of attention contained in the twenty essays of this book. It would not be amiss to call it an encyclopædia of chemical geology. It is worth while to call the readers' attention to the essay on the origin of petroleum; remarks on the origin of coal. The geological student should especially attend to the whole of the matter concerning the origin of crystalline rocks, for every fact will be valuable to him. The final essays are directed to the establishment of a theory of chemical relations on a more assured and philosophical basis. Many of the views contained therein seem, after years of the forgetfulness which is so often fruitful of final approbation, to be now gaining acceptance among chemists.

The tone of the book is on the whole singularly uniform for work composed of fragments, done during twenty-five years of labor. Some readers may find it a little over-personal, and at times aggressive; but this is apt to be the case in the writings of a man thoroughly in love with his subject and fully convinced of his opinions. The polemical parts might have been spared without damage to the work; yet they are german to the matter and written in a fair spirit.

The mechanical parts of the work are pretty well done; there is an admirable Table of Contents, but the Index is hastily done and incomplete. There are names cited in important references in the book which do not appear in the Index. The old laws about indexes seem to have become dead letters, so we cannot pass sentence in this case.

On the whole, this volume is among the most creditable monuments of American science, and we may well hope the author may live to gather other rich harvests from the seed he has so well sown.

9. — *A Foregone Conclusion.* By W. D. HOWELLS. Boston: J. R. Osgood & Co. 1875.

THOSE who, a couple of years ago, read "A Chance Acquaintance" will find much interest in learning how the author has justified the liberal fame awarded that performance. Having tried other literary forms with remarkable success, Mr. Howells finally proved himself an accomplished story-teller, and the critic lurking in even the kindest reader will be glad to ascertain whether this consummation was due chiefly to chance or to skill. "A Chance Acquaintance" was indeed not only a very charming book, but a peculiarly happy hit; the fancy

of people at large was vastly tickled by the situation it depicted; the hero and heroine were speedily promoted to the distinction of types, and you became likely to overhear discussions as to the probability of their main adventures wherever men and women were socially assembled. Kitty Ellison and her weak-kneed lover, we find, are still objects of current allusion, and it would be premature, even if it were possible, wholly to supersede them; but even if Mr. Howells was not again to hit just that nail, he was welcome to drive in another beside it and to supply the happy creations we have mentioned with successors who should divide our admiration. We had little doubt ourselves that he would on this occasion reach whatever mark he had aimed at; for, with all respect to the good fortune of his former novel, it seemed to us very maliciously contrived to play its part. It would have been a question in our minds, indeed, whether it was not even too delicate a piece of work for general circulation, — whether it had not too literary a quality to please that great majority of people who prefer to swallow their literature without tasting. But the best things in this line hit the happy medium, and it seems to have turned out, experimentally, that Mr. Howells managed at once to give his book a loose enough texture to let the more simply-judging kind fancy they were looking at a vivid fragment of social history itself, and yet to infuse it with a lurking artfulness which should endear it to the initiated. It rarely happens that what is called a popular success is achieved by such delicate means; with so little forcing of the tone or mounting of the high horse. People at large do not flock every day to look at a sober cabinet-picture. Mr. Howells continues to practise the cabinet-picture manner, though in his present work he has introduced certain broader touches. He has returned to the ground of his first literary achievements, and introduced us again to that charming half-merry, half-melancholy Venice which most Americans know better through his pages than through any others. He did this, in a measure, we think, at his risk; partly because there was a chance of disturbing an impression which, in so far as he was the author of it, had had time to grow very tranquil and mellow; and partly because there has come to be a not unfounded mistrust of the Italian element in light literature. Italy has been made to supply so much of the easy picturesqueness, the crude local color of poetry and the drama, that a use of this expedient is vaguely regarded as a sort of unlawful short-cut to success, — one of those coarsely mechanical moves at chess which, if you will, are strictly within the rules of the game, but which offer an antagonist strong provocation to fold up the board. Italians have been, from

Mrs. Radcliffe down, among the stock-properties of romance ; their associations are melodramatic, their very names are supposed to go a great way toward getting you into a credulous humor, and they are treated, as we may say, as bits of coloring-matter, which if placed in solution in the clear water of uninspired prose are warranted to suffuse it instantaneously with the most delectable hues. The growing refinement of the romancer's art has led this to be considered a rather gross device, calculated only to delude the simplest imaginations, and we may say that the presumption is now directly against an Italian in a novel, until he has pulled off his slouched hat and mantle and shown us features and limbs that an Anglo-Saxon would acknowledge. Mr. Howells's temerity has gone so far as to offer us a priest of the suspected race, — a priest with a dead-pale complexion, a blue chin, a dreamy eye, and a name in *elli*. The burden of proof is upon him that we shall believe in him, but he casts it off triumphantly at an early stage of the narrative, and we confess that our faith in Don Ippolito becomes at last really poignant and importunate.

"A Venetian priest in love with an American girl, — there's richness, as Mr. Squeers said !" — such was the formula by which we were first gossipingly made acquainted with the subject of "*A Foregone Conclusion*." An amiable American widow, travelling in Italy with her daughter, lingers on in Venice into the deeper picturesqueness of the early summer. With that intellectual thriftiness that characterizes many of her class (though indeed in Mrs. Vervain it is perhaps only a graceful anomaly the more), she desires to provide the young girl with instruction in Italian, and requests the consul of her native land (characteristically again) to point her out a teacher. The consul finds himself interested in a young ecclesiastic, with an odd mechanical turn, who has come to bespeak the consular patronage for some fanciful device in gunnery, and whose only wealth is a little store of English, or rather Irish, phrases, imparted by a fellow-priest from Dublin. Having been obliged to give the poor fellow the cold shoulder as an inventor, he is prompt in offering him a friendly hand as an Italian master, and Don Ippolito is introduced to Miss Vervain. Miss Vervain is charming, and the young priest discovers it to his cost. He falls in love with her, offers himself, is greeted with the inevitable horror provoked by such a proposition from such a source, feels the deep displeasure he must have caused, but finds he is only the more in love, resists, protests, rebels, takes it all terribly hard, becomes intolerably miserable, and falls fatally ill, while the young girl and her mother hurry away from Venice. Such is a rapid outline of Mr. Howells's story, which, it will

be seen, is simple in the extreme, — is an air played on a single string, but an air exquisitely modulated. Though the author has not broken ground widely, he has sunk his shaft deep. The little drama goes on altogether between four persons, — chiefly, indeed, between two, — but on its limited scale it is singularly complete, and the interest gains sensibly from compression. Mr. Howells's touch is almost that of a miniature-painter; every stroke in "*A Foregone Conclusion*" plays its definite part, though sometimes the eye needs to linger a moment to perceive it. It is not often that a young lady in a novel is the resultant of so many fine intentions as the figure of Florida Vervain. The interest of the matter depends greatly, of course, on the quality of the two persons thus dramatically confronted, and here the author has shown a deep imaginative force. Florida Vervain and her lover form, as a couple, a more effective combination even than Kitty Ellison and Mr. Arbuton; for Florida, in a wholly different line, is as good — or all but as good — as the sweetheart of that sadly incapable suitor; and Don Ippolito is not only a finer fellow than the gentleman from Boston, but he is more acutely felt, we think, and better understood on the author's part. Don Ippolito is a real creation, — a most vivid, complete, and appealing one; of how many touches and retouches, how many caressing, enhancing strokes he is made up, each reader must observe for himself. He is in every situation a distinct personal image, and we never lose the sense of the author's seeing him in his habit as he lived, — "moving up and down the room with his sliding step, like some tall, gaunt, unhappy girl," — and verging upon that quasi-hallucination with regard to him which is the law of the really creative fancy. His childish mildness, his courtesy, his innocence, which provokes a smile, but never a laugh, his meagre experience, his general helplessness, are rendered with an unerring hand: there is no crookedness in the drawing, from beginning to end. We have wondered, for ourselves, whether we should not have been content to fancy him a better Catholic and more intellectually at rest in his priestly office, — so that his passion for the strange and lovely girl who is so suddenly thrust before him should, by itself, be left to account for his terrible trouble; but it is evident, on the other hand, that his confiding her his doubts and his inward rebellion forms the common ground on which they come closely together, and the picture of his state of mind has too much truthful color not to justify itself. He is a representation of extreme moral simplicity, and his figure might have been simpler if he had been a consenting priest, rather than a protesting one. But, though he might have been in a

way more picturesque, he would not have been more interesting; and the charm of the portrait is in its suffering us to feel with him, and its offering nothing that we find mentally disagreeable, — as we should have found the suggestion of prayers stupidly mumbled and of the *odeur de sacristie*. The key to Don Ippolito's mental strainings and yearnings is in his fancy for mechanics, which is a singularly happy stroke in the picture. It indicates the intolerable *discomfort* of his position, as distinguished from the deeper unrest of passionate scepticism, and by giving a sort of homely practical basis to his possible emancipation, makes him relapse into bondage only more tragical. It is a hard case, and Mr. Howells has written nothing better — nothing which more distinctly marks his faculty as a story-teller — than the pages in which he traces it to its climax. The poor caged youth, straining to the end of his chain, pacing round his narrow circle, gazing at the unattainable outer world, bruising himself in the effort to reach it and falling back to hide himself and die unpitied, — is a figure which haunts the imagination and claims a permanent place in one's melancholy memories.

The character of Florida Vervain contributes greatly to the dusky, angular relief of Don Ippolito. This young lady is a singularly original conception, and we remember no heroine in fiction in whom it is proposed to interest us on just such terms. "Her husband laughed," we are told at the close of the book, "to find her protecting and serving [her children] with the same tigerish tenderness, the same haughty humility, as that with which she used to care for poor Mrs. Vervain; and he perceived that this was merely the direction away from herself of that intense arrogance of nature which, but for her power and need of loving, would have made her intolerable. What she chiefly exacted from them, in return for her fierce devotedness, was the truth in everything; she was content they should be rather less fond of her than of their father, whom, indeed, they found much more amusing." A heroine who ripens into this sort of wife and mother is rather an exception among the tender sisterhood. Mr. Howells has attempted to enlist our imagination on behalf of a young girl who is positively unsympathetic, and who has an appearance of chilling rigidity and even of almost sinister reserve. He has brilliantly succeeded, and his heroine just escapes being disagreeable, to be fascinating. She is a poet's invention, and yet she is extremely real, — as real, in her way, as that Kitty Ellison whom she so little resembles. In these two figures Mr. Howells has bravely notched the opposite ends of his measure, and

there is pleasure in reflecting on the succession of charming girls arrayed, potentially, along the intermediate line. He has outlined his field ; we hope he will fill it up. His women are always most sensibly women ; their motions, their accents, their ideas, savor essentially of the sex ; he is one of the few writers who hold a key to feminine logic and detect a method in feminine madness. It deepens, of course, immeasurably, the tragedy of Don Ippolito's sentimental folly, that Florida Vervain should be the high-and-mighty young lady she is, and gives an additional edge to the peculiar cruelty of his situation, — the fact that, being what he is, he is of necessity, as a lover, repulsive. But Florida is a complex personage, and the tale depends in a measure in her having been able to listen to him in a pitying, maternal fashion, out of the abundance of her characteristic strength. There is no doubt that, from the moment she learns he has dreamed she might love him, he becomes hopelessly disagreeable to her ; but the author has ventured on delicate ground in attempting to measure the degree in which passionate pity might qualify her repulsion. It is ground which, to our sense, he treads very firmly ; but the episode of Miss Vervain's seizing the young priest's head and caressing it will probably provoke as much discussion as to its verisimilitude as young Arbuton's famous repudiation of the object of his refined affections. For our part, we think Miss Vervain's embrace was more natural than otherwise — for Miss Vervain ; and, natural or not, it is admirably poetic. The poetry of the tale is limited to the priest and his pupil. Mrs. Vervain is a humorous creation, and in intention a very happy one. The kindly, garrulous, military widow, with her lively hospitality to the things that don't happen, and her serene unconsciousness of the things that do, is a sort of image of the way human levity hovers about the edge of all painful occurrences. Her scatter-brained geniality deepens the picture of her daughter's brooding preoccupations, and there is much sustained humor in making her know so much less of the story in which she plays a part than we do. Her loquacity, however, at times, strikes us as of a trifle too shrill a pitch, and her manner may be charged with lacking the repose, if not of the Veres of Vere, at least of the Veres of Providence. But there is a really ludicrous image suggested by the juxtaposition of her near-sightedness and her cheerful ignorance of Don Ippolito's situation, in which, at the same time, she takes so friendly an interest. She *overlooks* the tragedy going on under her nose, just as she overlooks the footstool on which she stumbles when she comes into a room. This touch proves that with a genuine artist, like Mr. How-

ells, there is an unfailing cohesion of all ingredients. Ferris, the consul, whose ultimately successful passion for Miss Vervain balances the sad heart-history of the priest, will probably find — has, we believe, already found — less favor than his companions, and will be reputed to have come too easily by his good fortune. He is an attempt at a portrait of a rough, frank, and rather sardonic humorist, touched with the *sans gêne* of the artist and even of the Bohemian. He is meant to be a good fellow in intention and a likable one in person; but we think the author has rather over-emphasized his irony and his acerbity. He holds his own firmly enough, however, as a make-weight in the action, and it is not till Don Ippolito passes out of the tale and the scale descends with a jerk into his quarter that most readers — feminine readers at least — shake their heads unmistakably. Mr. Howells's conclusion — his last twenty pages — will, we imagine, make him a good many dissenters, — among those, at least, whose enjoyment has been an enjoyment of his art. The story passes into another tone, and the new tone seems to *jurer*, as the French say, with the old. It passes out of Venice and the exquisite Venetian suggestiveness, over to Providence, to New York, to the Fifth Avenue Hotel, and the Academy of Design. We ourselves regret the transition, though the motive of our regrets is difficult to define. It is a transition from the ideal to the real, to the vulgar, from soft to hard, from charming color to something which is not color. Providence and the Fifth Avenue Hotel certainly have their rights; but we doubt whether their rights, in an essentially romantic theme, reside in a commixture with the suggestions offered us in such a picture as this: —

“The portal was a tall arch of Venetian Gothic, tipped with a carven flame; steps of white Istrian stone descended to the level of the lowest ebb, irregularly embossed with barnacles and dabbling long fringes of soft green sea-mosses in the rising and falling tide. Swarms of water-bugs and beetles played over the edges of the steps, and crabs scuttled sidewise into deeper water at the approach of a gondola. A length of stone-capped brick wall, to which patches of stucco still clung, stretched from the gate on either hand, under cover of an ivy that flung its mesh of shining green from within, where there lurked a lovely garden, stately, spacious for Venice, and full of a delicious half-sad surprise for whoso opened upon it. In the midst it had a broken fountain, with a marble naiad standing on a shell, and looking saucier than the sculptor meant, from having lost the point of her nose; nymphs and fauns and shepherds and shepherdesses, her kinsfolk, coquetted in and out among the greenery in flirtation not to be embarrassed by the fracture of an arm or the casting of a leg or so; one lady had no head, but she was the boldest of all. In this garden there were some mulberry and pome-

granate trees, several of which hung about the fountain with seats in their shade, and, for the rest, there seemed to be mostly roses and oleanders, with other shrubs of the kind that made the greatest show of blossom and cost the least for tendance."

It was in this garden that Don Ippolito told his love. We are aware that to consider Providence and New York not worthy to be mentioned in the same breath with it is a strictly conservative view of the case, and the author of "Their Wedding Journey" and "A Chance Acquaintance" has already proved himself, where American local color is concerned, a thoroughgoing radical. We may ground our objection to the dubious element, in this instance, on saying that the story is Don Ippolito's, and that in virtue of that fact it should not have floated beyond the horizon of the lagoons. It is the poor priest's property, as it were; we grudge even the reversion of it to Mr. Ferris. We confess even to a regret at seeing it survive Don Ippolito at all, and should have advocated a trustful surrender of Florida Vervain's subsequent fortunes to the imagination of the reader. But we have no desire to expatiate restrictively on a work in which, at the worst, the imagination finds such abundant pasture. "A Foregone Conclusion" will take its place as a singularly perfect production. That the author was an artist his other books had proved, but his art ripens and sweetens in the sun of success. His manner has now refined itself till it gives one a sense of pure *quality* which it really taxes the ingenuity to express. There is not a word in the present volume as to which he has not known consummately well what he was about; there is an exquisite intellectual comfort in feeling one's self in such hands. Mr. Howells has ranked himself with the few writers on whom one counts with luxurious certainty, and this little masterpiece confirms our security.

10. — *Some Leading Principles of Political Economy newly expounded.*

By J. E. CAIRNES, M. A., Emeritus Professor of Political Economy in University College, London. New York: Harper and Brothers. 1874. 8vo. pp. 421.

SINCE the death of Mr. Mill, Professor Cairnes is probably the most authoritative living writer on political economy in our language. This, we hasten to add, is said without disparagement to the claims which may be put forward in behalf of our own countryman, Mr. Carey, who is regarded by a considerable body of readers as the prophet of an altogether new dispensation from that of the English